

Dark Horse

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/31819828) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/31819828>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham , Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Romance , argument , make-up sex , Established Relationship , Angst with a Happy Ending , Dark Will Graham , Jealous Hannibal Lecter , Vulnerable Hannibal Lecter , Possessive Will Graham , Dom Will Graham , Smut , Outdoor Sex , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Needy Hannibal Lecter , alternate chapter , physical fight , Hair-pulling , Spanking , Neither Will nor Hannibal is seriously injured , Suicidal Thoughts , Top Will Graham , Bottom Hannibal Lecter
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Gold Rush , Part 1 of Gold Rush Dark , Part 5 of Earthsickwithoutyou's Bottom Hannibal Collection 🍑🥰
Stats:	Published: 2021-06-09 Words: 8,525 Chapters: 1/1

Dark Horse

by [EarthsickWithoutYou](#)

Summary

An alternate twist on the argument scene from Chapter 16 of my fic, "Gold Rush." Angry, jealous and insecure, Hannibal tries to leave Will. Of course, Will's not having that. *At all.*

Notes

cw: Just a heads-up that this story contains a much rougher physical fight between Will and Hannibal than I've written in the main "Gold Rush" story.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

1.

Hannibal

“As a jealous man, I suffer four times over: because I am jealous, because I blame myself for being so, because I fear that my jealousy will wound the other, because I allow myself to be subject to a banality: I suffer from being excluded, from being aggressive, from being crazy, and from being common.” - Roland Barthes, A Lover’s Discourse

*“Maybe I’m too emotional
But your apathy’s like a wound in salt” -Olivia Rodrigo, “Good 4 U”*

Hannibal listened as the front door shut and let it sink into his bloodstream that Will was gone. Had simply left, rather than even reacting to his jealous outburst, his uncharacteristic abandonment of his carefully guarded senses.

There he stood in his precious kitchen, his safe haven, never less safe from his own wild demons. He swiped at the lock of hair which had fallen into his eyes and sniffed back his incoming tears, refusing to give further vent to an emotion which got no response from Will.

Will, it seemed, did not care for his dramatics. Hannibal bared his soul, shared some of his most excruciating insecurities about his lover preferring a particular “type” of man, fears that he only matched a certain amorous profile, that Will could easily replace him. These terrors, twisting and writhing in his soul, had no basis in reality or rationality, rooted in an immense possessiveness which, at any moment, might drive him fully mad.

Why indeed should Hannibal go mad alone? Why should he slit the wrists of his emotions and bleed all over the floor in front of someone who found his hysterical fits of passion *annoying*? All he wanted was for Will to *feel* the way he did, crushed by an avalanche of adoration. Once, so recently, in fact, Hannibal was entirely certain that Will reciprocated his devotion in full. Yesterday, he would not have been capable of this type of paranoid doubt.

But Will’s conduct now, leaving him to stew in the juices of his tantrum as one places a child in time out! Hannibal fumed silently, deliberating on revenge. Or a solution, a way back to peace, for he was stumbling, melting under a brutal sun, dehydrated and isolated, reaching out in vain for a mirage of the love he believed was real.

He stalked to the bedroom, flung open the closet doors, reached to the top shelf where he kept his largest suitcase.

Part of him wanted an excuse to get out.

With Will, loving Will, he was in freefall. He should allow himself to believe this incident was proof positive he had wasted his time opening himself up only to be dismissed as a forgettable irritation. Perhaps the Will he thought he knew was a fantasy construct, the wishful thinking that comes from a demented infatuation, from imprinting on what one can

never really possess, only yearn for, fruitlessly building up the other's perfection. Meanwhile, the other speaks false words of plastic sentiment, cementing the imago, miring the lover in a trap tantamount to death of the self.

Why should Hannibal lose another shred of his pride, his autonomy, his secure understanding of what the future held? Life used to be so pleasing and clean. It could be so again.

In letting Will go, he was inviting a horrible crash, breaking his own heart. But a crash was an answer. The freefall would be over.

Will could find another facsimile of his own romantic ideal, replace him within days. Hours? Hannibal brushed tears from his face, which felt scarlet and hot as his temples pulsed with pain. Making himself suspect these things was torment enough; forcing himself to believe them was a miserable necessity. Force-feeding himself this poison might be the only antidote to his breakdown.

He packed a quick assortment of clothes, toiletries, cash, his passport and credit cards, and hurried out to the Bentley. Having forgotten all about Agents Liu and Ross in the SUV parked on the street in front of his house, Hannibal flinched and refused to make eye contact as they noticed him rushing about, red-faced, disheveled, a shadow of his formerly untouchable, elegant self. He could get the shadow back, reassemble the person suit to protect his heart, but first he must go as far from here as he could conceive.

Much to his dismay, Will arrived home before he had a chance to make his grand escape. The dogs trotted neatly behind their master down the pristine sidewalk of the posh neighborhood, no leash needed to compel the pets to remain close or stay out of the street. Hannibal had allowed himself to be tamed that way, too, but no longer. The invisible leash was not going to have another chance to strangle him.

Will, in his black peacoat with the collar popped up and steely reserves of inscrutable, dark feeling in eyes of stormy seas, had never been more beautiful, nor more infuriating to the last detail of long lashes, pretty strong hands, and admonishing scowl.

Hannibal shoved his suitcase deeper into the trunk, which was quite large enough to have accommodated three more such bags. In truth, he was making a scene to try and cause Will even one percent of the anguish he felt. It was likely a hopeless attempt and quite embarrassing, so dull and human and flawed, this anger, jealousy and need.

He would fly to Tokyo, perhaps, Australia or Fiji, become a professional tourist again as in the halcyon days of his twenties. No responsibility, none of the ties that bound him to humiliating servitude over a useless longing. He could vent out all of this foolish agony with meaningless flings and plentiful murders of the rude, immerse himself in new recipes and every decadent variety of art and nightlife.

Will stopped beside the car and whistled for the dogs to halt. They sat on the ground in contented obedience.

Hannibal slammed the trunk shut and took the car keys out of his pocket, giving Will a single glare by way of greeting.

Will looked from the trunk to the keys to Hannibal's flaming face where the tracks of tears made him look like the madman incarnate. He spoke, emphatic with a feral anger that startled Hannibal to the core.

"Just what the hell do you think you're doing?"

2.

Will

*"Make me your Aphrodite, make me your one and only
But don't make me your enemy, your enemy, your enemy..."* -Katy Perry, "Dark Horse"

"What?"

Hannibal looked genuinely surprised, which gave Will a shallow, grim satisfaction, there and gone too soon. He stepped forward, backing Hannibal into the side of the Bentley.

"What?" Will repeated with a sadistic smile. He had never been this enraged in his entire fucking life, and Hannibal was going to know it, *feel* it, by the time he was done.

Shock of bitter heartbreak and agonizing despair was still trying to tear into him like wolf teeth, ripping every shred of love's protective flesh from his fragile bones, leaving him in a pile of gore on the cold sidewalk. But he was going to be fucking mad before he was broken, *God* he was mad.

This was the last thing he had expected to find when he came back home, to *their* home. Hannibal had invited him to live here in his beautiful castle, on the inside of his walls, had given him the keys to the Pandora's box of his heart.

Will had let his own walls come down, had exposed every one of his darkest secrets, shown Hannibal every ounce of devoted attention, spoiled him with equal excess to how Hannibal pampered, reassured and reassured and reassured--

They had one stupid argument about exes, Will took a fucking walk to try and *calm down* before he said something he regretted, and Hannibal tried to *leave*?!

He thought he would find Hannibal waiting for him, loyal and penitent, which only made this infuriating, terrifying, *ruination* of a surprise a thousand times worse.

Hannibal would suffer for this.

He pointed in his lover's face, blatantly rude. "*What,*" he snapped, flinging Hannibal's ridiculous answer back in his face like trash. "The *hell* do you think. You are *doing*, Hannibal?"

His breath puffed on the frigid air, but it wasn't the early December chill making Hannibal shiver. He had never seen Will like this, and obviously didn't know what to do.

Oh, honey. You ain't seen nothin' yet.

Rage crystallized to the breaking point in Will's freezing gaze. The voice inside him was the Louisiana teenager who had taken his first life on a blinding high of righteous fury. Only Hannibal could drag him back in time to his most vulnerable state, undo decades of work on making himself immune to weakness. Only Will could do the same to Hannibal.

"I'm leaving," Hannibal said, the words deceptively simple.

How could mere words hold or represent such a colossal betrayal? This act was worse than mean or cowardly; it was beyond any crime Will could conceive to compare it with. Hannibal leaving him existed in a place outside of any reality Will would submit to live in.

Hannibal would submit instead.

His handsome, dignified, brilliant lover swallowed hard, trying to make himself unreadable, succeeding perhaps halfway. Will could still see anger, misery and fear in his chiseled, beloved features, but the exact configuration of them, their root cause in past trauma and the correct formula of resolution evaded him. Plus, he was reeling himself, not ready to talk in any way approaching *calm*.

"Calm down, Will." How often in his life had Will heard this condescending phrase, from teachers when he was a kid, more recently from Jack or Alana -- *calm down, be normal. Do what we want you to do and go away.*

Hannibal had never been like that, had always wanted the brunt of Will, well. He was getting it now.

"And what did I say I would do if you ever tried to leave me?" Will hissed.

He got an elbow against Hannibal's chest and pressed hard, his words acidly intense.

Behind them, Agent Ross rolled the SUV window down and called, "Everything okay, Agent Graham?"

"This is a personal, domestic matter," Will called back without breaking his smothering eye contact and roughly pinning hold on Hannibal. "Stay out of it."

"You're not going to kill me," Hannibal gritted out, wincing at the way Will hurt him with the crushing pressure against his ribs.

Still, the mirroring sadist was in there, his Ripper, tossing Will an evil smile, daring him, defying him.

"You think you know me so well?" Will shook his head and pushed harder, almost enough to break a rib.

“Agent Graham!” Agent Liu warned.

Will rolled his neck around his shoulders, letting his tensed bones crack audibly.

“Do I go to your house and try to get in the middle of your personal arguments?” he retorted, not bothering to look at his fellow agents, still entirely focused -- aimed -- at Hannibal, a cocked gun.

He let Hannibal go in a thrust of fresh determination, a plan of what to do falling rapidly into place. Suitable punishment, proper to the occasion.

With another pointed whistle, he ordered the dogs to follow, strode to the front door, opened it, sent them to bed.

When he turned back to Hannibal, he found the doctor opening the driver’s side door of the Bentley. His blood boiled, molten rage flooding his every instinct, and he ran with lethal speed to the sleek car, then grabbed its elegant owner around the middle from behind and pushed him hard towards the house.

Hannibal hit the snow-covered ground with a blank, heavy thud of astonishment, scrambling about trying to get up, but the fluffy slush he’d landed in was slippery. Will watched him struggle with dark amusement for a few racing heartbeats that pounded through his ears and skull.

Then he put his aching hands that craved violence like his only remaining sustenance back on Hannibal, grasped tight on silky, silvering hair and *yanked*, again directly towards the house. He heaved the older man forward on an immensely painful inertia caused by his brute force, adrenaline making him stronger than usual.

Hannibal landed sprawled on the front step, his bottom lip bloodied. He tried to get up again.

Will grabbed him by the scruff of his annoyingly dapper Burberry coat and flung him inside, then slammed the door shut so hard it almost broke the hinges.

Immediately, the Agents were at the door, knocking and calling his name accusingly. They must not have had time to call for back-up, moving almost as quick as Will. Their first thought and last mistake: to put a stop to this fight before Hannibal got any more hurt. The lack of back-up was a relief, at least. Only two of them to deal with.

Will wrenched the door open again as behind him, a disoriented Hannibal sat up and rubbed his neck, licked his blood-spattered lip.

Good. Sit there and think about what you’ve done. Learn your lesson.

Honestly, he’d had about enough of Liu and Ross anyway. He had it on good authority they frequently humiliated the fledgling agents in their weapons training course, and now they were being downright rude, intruding in his personal business.

“Agent Graham, just what in the world is going--” Agent Ross’ last expression was comically shocked as Will whipped a small but eminently effective handgun with a silencer attached

from his trousers and shot him square in the forehead.

The small, neat bullet hole sent Ross crumpling to the foyer floor with its fancy paisley rug of royal blue and gold. Before Liu could take in what happened, he joined his partner. The rug was another convenience; all the better to roll the corpses up and get started on disposing of them later.

“You’re completely insane,” Hannibal said in breathy astonishment, getting shakily to his feet, staring at Will as if he was a ghost.

“Yes.” Will put the gun down on the table and shut the door.

The snow was falling in great gusts of thick flakes and icy wind; no neighbor who might have passed by on the sidewalk or looked over from a lawn or window would have seen a damn thing. Will could disappear the SUV later; just another couple of Ripper victims for him to report to Jack when he got around to it.

“Yes, I am,” he said with a harsh laugh, leveling Hannibal with his menacing, malevolent eyes, free from any hint of remorse. “And *you* were fucking warned.”

Hannibal shook his head and stormed away with whatever ragged dignity he could summon, still disoriented from the three falls and Will’s man-handling.

Will sighed, slipped his coat off, hung it up, stuffed his leather gloves into the pockets, and rolled his shirt sleeves up to the elbow. He took a few deep, steadying breaths, listening to the muffled sounds of Hannibal moving around in the bedroom.

Then he followed, only to find the door locked. He twisted the knob hard and called, “*Hannibal! Open this fucking door!*”

His voice was an unhinged, animal, terrifying thing, high as a primal scream, and he really didn’t give a damn. He pounded his fist on the door, making it shake. “Answer me!”

He put his sweaty palms against the door, bracing the insupportable weight of his being, losing even more control, falling down a rabbit hole inside himself he never even knew existed.

“I’m still leaving,” Hannibal sniffed pridefully. “You can’t make me stay with your raving nonsense.”

“*My raving nonsense?*” Will demanded, his throat hurting from how loud he was being. “My ---!” He slammed his hand against the door and said in a lower, gravelly tone, “The *hypocrisy*, while hardly surprising, is *stunning*. You throw a goddamn vase through a window because I used to sleep with other people before I even met you--”

“Because you accused me of collecting pretty lovers to display on a shelf until they bore me, and considered yourself such a disposable trinket, when *you* are guilty of far worse. At least I do not allow my admirers to flagrantly flirt with me. At least I don’t need to constantly check my *options* while claiming to be committed to my relationship.”

"What do you call your little wine 'sessions' with Dr. Du Maurier, then?"

"I can't do this anymore, Will. Bedelia is a *friend*.. She does not ask me for dates, nor comment on my attractiveness. She respects basic boundaries of--"

"I told you I didn't know Hawkins was attracted to me!"

"Please, Will." Hannibal's sarcasm sent another roiling wave of fury through Will.

"And Carter, fucking Carter, you killed him already! What do you want me to do, bring him back to life so you can kill him again because I confirmed we had sex? Show you headshots of all my ex-lovers so you can see a lot of them were older than me, with greying hair and great style, produce some kind of impossible, nonexistent proof positive *outside of me saying so* that you're not another item on the conveyor belt of my love life?"

His words were blurring together on the rage-drunk Southern accented wildness of his gritty voice, and every word hurt. His throat screamed in pain due to the way he had been abusing it with all the shouting, and Will didn't even care. He wanted Hannibal *behaved*. He wanted Hannibal to *stay*. Forever.

Nothing else mattered, all he saw was red, and all he needed was the satisfaction of Hannibal's complete surrender. Every time he thought he had conquered this man's defenses, another one sprung up like a cruel surprise, making all his own insecurities roar back to life. He couldn't *live* like this.

He was shaking, crying angry tears that rushed down his cheeks like fire trails. He rammed his fist into the door again, bloodying his knuckles, another little fix of masochistic comfort, gone too fast. He couldn't hold onto his sense of ever being okay again, any more than he could hold onto Hannibal without extreme measures.

Then he heard a *zipper* being pulled, knew it was another stupid fucking suitcase from Hannibal's designer collection, and he ran backwards before throwing his body into the door with all his might. Five good, hard runs -- grunting, growling, keening in unbearable pain in his shoulder -- were all it took, and the door gave.

He went flying into the bedroom, then pulled himself up into an animal pounce stance, squaring his shoulders. One of his shoulders hurt bad, but what did that matter? He'd broken down doors before. Pain, unless he was giving it to or taking it from Hannibal, existed merely as the fine print of who he was and what he had to do in consequence.

Hannibal turned pale, standing there beside his latest attempt to pack up clothes and leave. "Will--"

"Did you think I was *kidding*?" Will stood and prowled up to him, gathering up a fistful of his shirt, yanking Hannibal against him. "When I said I'd kill you if you tried to leave me? And now you're going to walk out on me, after everything we built together, all the happiness we still had to come? You really think I would...*let* you?"

3.

Hannibal

*“What if I said I was built on bricks of carelessness and crumbs
What if I said I'd be gone before I could come
Would you let me out?”*

*You ought to know where I'm coming from
How I was alone when I burned my home
And all of the pieces were torn and thrown
You should know where I'm coming from”*
- Banks, “You Should Know Where I'm Coming From”

Will spoke so forcibly that spit flew from his lovely pink lips and sprayed in Hannibal's face. The older man had to fight the urge to lick it up. He had never been so excited in his life.

He did not know how to do this: be in a relationship, give and take, find a way of fairness and compassion that could furnish forgiveness. He had no concept of how to entirely trust another human being.

It had seemed...in the massive confusion and pain of the night's events and Will walking out while he was so naked in his feelings before his eyes...

It had *seemed* that the easiest thing to do was leave. Save himself, be Dr. Hannibal Lecter again, not Will Graham's helpless slave, not love's hapless victim. What did he know of love, disconnected from loss?

If he could choose the loss, when and where and why, wasn't that the safest way of all? Far safer than perilously inconvenient compassion.

But here was Will, beautiful, dangerous, the animal finally uncaged in front of him, because of him and for him, and Hannibal couldn't possibly get enough. He did not understand how to let himself be consumed by vulnerability, how to give into an eternal freefall, surrender his gravity. But this, violence, rage and consequence, brutality of feeling, he *understood*. This he could give Will, this he could take.

He was compelled to keep pushing, see how far Will would go. If Will did kill him, *good*.

It would be an exquisite way to leave this monstrous, haunting life, crushed by the hands he loved, for he never doubted Will would use his hands. It would be intimate. Hannibal, possessed, subdued in all his baffled, frightened push-back against adoring too much. A last surrender, stolen from him, to his eternal gratitude.

He would never have to wake up one day and find Will gone because he had ceased to excite his lover, or because he had proven a disappointment. This was much better. It made *sense*. He had waited in vain for life to make sense again from the moment he met Will, and now, at

last it did. Will scanned his face, brow furrowing at what he found there, an instability to match his own. This only made Hannibal's rebellion against his dominating orders harder to understand.

"We're the *same*," Will sighed, deeply frustrated. "Why don't you want this? Want me?"

Keep pushing him, he's almost there. All Hannibal had to do was remove Will's hope that he would stop this nonsense and be reasonable. "Perhaps you want other people too much, and I can't tolerate that."

"You *bastard*." Will shoved Hannibal onto the bed, but instead of climbing on top and either horribly murdering him or deliciously fucking him or both, as Hannibal fervently hoped, his mind swimming in confused desires, he stalked away to the kitchen.

Hannibal lay there stunned for a few moments, then got up and followed Will.

Will was splashing his face with water at the sink, an impulse which Hannibal understood. The fight had rendered both of their skin fiery-hot; they each ran warm naturally, and went to fever pitch with violent throes of passion.

Water dripped from his gorgeous face; Will turned the faucet off, swiped a shirt sleeve across his cheeks, did not need to look up to know Hannibal followed. "You're fixating on a series of meaningless, sporadic flings with people who could never in a million years hold the slightest candle to you. It's beginning to look like willful ignorance, and I have no patience with that, Hannibal."

The deadly, deceptive calm in Will's voice sent shivers of pleasure down Hannibal's spine.

More, more, give me more, hit me, push me, hurt me, break me in your hands...

He was insatiable, back in his desert of love, dying of thirst euphorically this time.

"Have you thought about Carter, Hawkins, or other past lovers, flirtation partners, your so-called *flings*, when we make love?"

Hannibal hurt himself more than expected with the question. He had wondered about this with anguished, barbed curiosity for ages, leaving deep lacerations in the tenderest flesh of his heart: how could he be that special? How could he mean so much to Will? It must be too good to be true.

Will's mouth had dropped open; Hannibal had time to add another sharp stab of accusation. "You have much more in common with Carter, for example. I don't know the first thing about the interests which he could discuss with you easily, and I am...cold, eccentric, strange. Difficult. Why shouldn't you think about him when we're inside each other, and wonder if you made the right choice of lover?"

"You know what?" Will threw his hands up. "Fine. Sure. I thought about Carter all the time, even Hawkins a few times, other lovers and almost lovers you don't even *know* about. Carter

was a goddamn stallion between the sheets, he put you to shame. He really knew how to make me come--”

Hannibal shuddered; this game had brought him back to his own unbearable jealousy much more problematically than expected. The mere suggestion of Will’s words containing truth destroyed him. He flung his hand across the nearest counter behind him, sending all of its contents smashing to the floor to join the broken window glass and vase fragments which had gathered caked snow.

The bowl of limes, the four bottles of imported mineral water, and his finest wooden knife holder all went tumbling chaotically. The limes rolled to random spots, the knives glinted in a pile of deadly-sharp light, surrounded by chunks of wood and splinters; the blue bottles of water shimmered, wet glitter like a sardonic party decoration scattered over the whole mess.

Will didn’t move an inch, not to avoid a potential scratch from the debris, not to lunge for Hannibal again, disappointingly. He looked down at the disaster Hannibal had made of his inner sanctum and meticulously curated belongings, small pieces of his world suddenly victim to his jealous rage. He *considered*, and Hannibal seethed.

The dogs didn’t bark; they had no reason to worry when Will was there. They trusted they would always be safe. Once, Will told Hannibal that Buster’s former owner treated him badly, and that one day after Will adopted the feisty little dog from a shelter, the former owner tracked him down and tried to take Buster back. Will had viciously killed him in front of the dogs, and with an animal’s impeccable instinct, they understood their owner would never let anyone hurt them or put them in harm’s way.

Behind Hannibal, there were the two glass doors that led to the backyard, and the snow went on, breaking the brief thaw in the cold weather which the last few weeks had brought like a lying promise of serenity. Flakes kept on falling through the broken window like a silent, uncaring salt shaker.

Another bubble of blood pushed out from Hannibal’s lip and he sucked it into his mouth, needing more of Will the Vigilante, the hunter, the wild one. Needing to matter enough to get it out of him.

"What I said about Carter wasn't even true, of course, I was just *mad*, Hannibal." Will's eyes flashed furious bright blue accusations. "You oughta know that without me saying. You've tasted my kiss. You should *know*."

"But I don't. I can't."

"If you spent half as much time listening to me say that I’ve never loved anyone but you, as you spend obsessing over idiots I *never* cared for, we wouldn’t be in this mess.” Will sneered, kicked some of the broken pieces on the floor instead of kicking Hannibal, and the doctor’s frustration burst forth again.

“You don’t care how I feel, only want me to fit the image you’ve decided I ought to match, someone ideal and obedient like a pet.” Hannibal stepped closer to Will and glowered at him, curling his red lip, tears stinging his eyes. “I wish I never met you.”

"Liar!" Will pulled his hand back and slapped Hannibal hard against one cheek, not the playful batting about the face of their sex slaps, but a serious, bruising blow.

Will stood breathing heavily as Hannibal fell back against the counter for support, his veins and pores and every stuttering breath in his body singing with joy and a craving for more of his lover's rough anger.

"Take it back!" Will nearly screamed, tears cascading down his angelic face. He stuck a hand in his lovely curls and tugged them hard.

There was a red bucket on the counter filled with spatulas and serving spoons, the accent container an example of Hannibal's occasionally tongue-in-cheek design choices, a splash of bright kitsch amidst the classical splendor. Will showed no regard for his exceptional decorating skills as he grabbed it and smashed it to the floor, then charged for Hannibal again.

"You didn't mean that, I know you didn't!" Will got tight in his face and spoke so loudly it hurt Hannibal's ears and echoed through his brain like wildfire, re-sparking his bliss.

"Stop it, talk to me!" Will screamed, shoving him harder into the counter. "Tell me it's a lie, say you love me. Lying motherfucker, I'll kill you. *Tell me!*" He slammed his fist down on the counter and the metal spice-rack shook. "Say it, even -- even if it isn't true, and I'll forgive you."

Sobs shook Will's body and Hannibal felt a sudden shock of guilt, but it was too late to save either of them from what must come next. He could be free and absolved, and Will could move on, find someone who...someone who...*what* was this next thought on the edge of his understanding?

There was another fearful anxiety motivating this savage desire for Will to murder him, now, tonight. Hannibal tasted it on his tongue like horrid bile, refused to admit it to himself, would *not* swallow. It reminded him of something else that had happened long ago, from which he had never, and could never recover. What made him an incomplete person. He never wanted to go back there.

His pride and independent spirit rebelled at the mere suggestion, negating it like the bars and locks over the door of his childhood memories kept him protected from the deepest recesses of his human trauma. So much easier to be the monster at the end, die that way, stay strong. Avoid what really scared him the most, what made him a little boy again.

"No," he whispered fiercely. "I won't."

He squeezed his eyes shut and swallowed his own tears. Will slapped his other cheek and left a bleeding scratch, purpling bruise slowly spreading. Hannibal moaned and let his eyes flutter open again in lustful, adoring, hazy resignation. Then he had the paradisiacal vision, the one for which he had yearned in fearful elation.

Will, his beautiful boy, his precious dark angel, sweetest sin and only remaining obsession. Will, snatching a polished butcher knife from the floor and pressing it to his throat. Hannibal

had hoped for Will's hands, but this was glorious, too. To feel Will pressing that shining metal deep inside him was a blissful last penetration. He was ready.

"You..." Will examined his face close-up, his burnt umber eyes, the light lashes dotted with tears, his bruised-up cheeks and bloody lips, the halting gust of breaths he assumed to be his last few.

Hannibal's easy submission to this, when he had refused so many earlier, easier submissions: merely to say he was sorry, to promise never to leave, to swear he knew he was Will's one and only true love. He would far rather die than do any of that.

Now, why would that be?

Will was too good a profiler for Hannibal to fool him, and the Ripper realized this when the younger man gave him a furious, knowing smirk. As angry as he had made Will this night, his lover was madder than ever now.

Hannibal had more than met his match: he'd been outdone by Will's lightning-fast intellect and the perfect identification between them, the way no one else would ever understand either one of them.

"You son of a bitch," Will complained, drawing the knife back slightly from Hannibal's throat to point it accusingly at his face. "You sick, selfish masochist. You really had me going."

4.

Will

"You're not going to die. You might wish you're going to die, but you're not going to. You need to settle down a little." - Alma, *Phantom Thread*

What pissed Will off was how he really wasn't mad anymore. Not being angry with Hannibal *infuriated* him.

"You want this, you want me to kill you. You're goading me," he accused, voice breathy with dawning understanding.

His heart pounded, he didn't know his heart could race faster, but here he was -- well, here, there, everywhere -- scattered all over Hannibal, but the trick was to force his lover to See what they both truly needed, accept it in some irrevocable way.

"If...you won't let me leave, then what other way is there?" Hannibal asked, trying to deflect. He was one smart bastard, but Will was most definitely a "fool me once" type of guy.

“Ah. See, you could kill *me*. Easily.” Will’s smirk softened to a smile, so complicated he could barely fathom his feelings, zig-zagging with nauseating swoops from bitter resentment to the irresistible, loving need to soothe what it was in Hannibal that hurt.

“You could overpower me. I’ve been wildly unstable this whole time, up till now. You’re bigger than me, stronger. I’m scrappy, it wouldn’t be easy, but you could do it. Chesapeake Ripper.” He laughed quietly. “Do you think I don’t *know* that? Do you think it hasn’t always turned me on?”

“I...” Hannibal looked around frantically.

“You’re running out of excuses. That’s because you’re having a panic attack, and your front brain can’t function at its usual, hyper-intelligent rate. Your thinking and reasoning have been slowed by the unavoidable fragility of *anxiety*, Dr. Lecter. You don’t recognize the symptoms, which, ironically you would have pinpointed in a patient within seconds. Because you’re fighting it so hard, the weakness, the humanity of it all, and something underneath that scares the hell out of you. You want me to let you go, through escape or death, but I *never* will.”

“Why?” Hannibal frowned, “I betrayed you, said awful things, tried to abandon you after you have been nothing but wonderful to me, so patient with all of my bizarre worries and hesitations. Why would you ever forgive me?”

“How could I not?” Will tilted his pretty face with an adoring smile and used the tip of the knife to lift the sweaty fringe of hair from Hannibal’s brow. “I understand now. What you need. Why you’re fighting this, fighting us, when it’s all you want. Losing this makes you prefer death to anything else, but I won’t allow you to get away that easy. Or indeed, Dr. Lecter, *ever*. Do *you* understand?”

“N-no...please end this, I can’t...Will. I can’t.”

“I know.” Will framed his face in both hands, blood dripping from his knuckles, black scrapes hardening slowly on the wounds from punching the door to get to his Hannibal, his love, his world. Nothing could hold him back. “I know, love. It hurts too much. You don’t want to look in there. But I’m afraid that unless you say the words out loud, you won’t ever be able to truly relax or accept joy.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Hannibal answered stiffly. His lower lip wobbled, blood-soaked and delicious-looking. Will *loved* him so much, even in his most maddening, stubborn moments.

How could he help loving what was his own, made and meant for his keeping and taking?

“I think you do. So I’m going to tell you this, because it’s true, and because I think it might help you to acknowledge what needs saying.”

Stroking his palms and fingers over the same face he’d slapped roughly, Will sighed, “I will never allow you to leave me. I just found out that I can’t kill you. I’ll never be capable. I love you too much. I’m completely obsessed with you.”

“Please stop,” Hannibal begged, closing his eyes, letting out another wet, half-smothered sob.

“I can’t. I know what’s good for you. What you need is to finally trust me more than you trust yourself. I will keep you safe from the darkest things inside you, but you’ve gotta give in, honey. Listen.”

Will kissed his forehead, smoothing back his hair, tenderly caressing his fingers through the strands. “If you try to leave, I will catch you, or I will track you, hunt you down, and drag you back to me. I’ll keep you prisoner for the rest of your life, if I have to. It isn’t what I want, but it’s better than losing you. What do you think of that?”

“You’d really do that?” Hannibal asked, his heart thudding bullet-fast and hard against the open palm of Will’s free hand. “For me?”

“For you, and only you. I’d tie you, gag you until you learned your lesson and agreed to be good. You’ll never, ever get away from me, Hannibal.” Will kissed him, his cheeks and nose and chin, savoring tear salt and hot skin, pecking at the red on his lips, then licking his own, smiling again so devotedly.

“Oh, Will...” Hannibal’s resistant expression melted into soft sentimentality. “Do you promise?”

“Honey. Of *course*. You want me to show you again, would that feel nice?”

Hannibal nodded emphatically. “Yes, please,” he begged, meek.

Will’s smile widened. He pet through his lover’s hair, massaging his shoulders, kissing him sweetly. “Okay.”

He grabbed Hannibal by the throat and slapped his face again, right where the darkest bruise was developing. Squeezing that gorgeous, strong neck tight, he threatened, “Don’t ever try and leave me again.”

Hannibal shoved him hard, punched him in the stomach, knocking the breath out of him. Will fell backwards on his bottom, hands getting cut right away by the random assortment of dangerous broken fragments on the floor.

“I’ll leave,” said Hannibal petulantly, “Any time I want.”

Will had to take a full minute to get his breath back. It was hardly the first time he’d had a hand full of bleeding scratches embedded with glass, so he expertly, quickly plucked the fragments out, during which time Hannibal went to the double glass doors and opened them, stepping out into the yard. Scrambling to his feet, Will pursued and found his lover trying to scale the fence and get into the neighbor’s yard, then probably run away down the street. Adorable.

He ran with all his might, grasped the back of Hannibal’s shirt collar, and flung him into the snow, then straddled him and pinned his wrists hard on the frigid, slushy ground.

It was fucking *freezing* out, but they were burning up, hot and sweaty with exertion, adrenaline and arousal. Hannibal grinned up at him with those cute fangs, and butterflies swirled in Will's stomach.

"See?" Will promised, "You really are trapped." Hannibal gazed at him as if looking into the gates of heaven itself. Will understood it now, that Hannibal could fight him off, could have shoved him away, jumped the fence and bolted, but he wanted Will to stop him. Needed Will's physical prowess, the bite of his fierce possession.

"I just wanted to know what you need so I can give it to you," he sighed. "Thank you for showing me."

He held Hannibal down harder, slamming his bare wrists into the wet freeze and devouring his lips in countless sloppy, bruising kisses.

"Oh, Will... *Will*..." Hannibal moaned softly.

"Need me to fuck you, Daddy?" Will kissed and sucked at his neck, licking and biting every inch of skin exposed by his open shirt collar.

"Please, I need you inside me." Hannibal gasped, his voice hoarse, his whole body riveted to the sensation of Will's harsh grip on his hands, that hot, wet, sloppy mouth trailing his skin, claiming and loving.

"Mmmm." Will sat up on top of him, gave one buck of his hips to bring their clothed cocks together with mutual cries of pained pleasure. "Fuck, Daddy, yes. Right here, right now, where anyone might see us. I only wish it was broad daylight. Everyone should know you're mine, get to see and hear how you break for me."

He spread his hands possessively over Hannibal's hips, undid his trousers and slipped them down, laughing gently when his lover cringed at the cold snow touching his naked ass.

"Don't worry, I'll get you warm again."

Will ripped Hannibal's shirt the rest of the way open and groped his pectorals before leaning down to kiss and suck his nipples, smiling at the way Hannibal whimpered, then reached down to awkwardly try and get his pants undone.

"So eager." Will helped him, undoing his own fly and shoving his pants down. The pain radiating from the place in his belly where Hannibal punched him, the knowledge it would leave a huge, nasty bruise even worse than the scabs on his fingers, all of that throbbed through him and made his cock twitch, dripping. He stroked himself to ease the tense arousal, shuddering when this only increased it even more.

"Fuck, it's cold," he shivered, "I hurt in more places than I can count. But it hurts so *good*, and I want you so much, I can't wait another second."

He reached a hand down to Hannibal's entrance, then grinned adoringly. "All ready for me, huh?"

"I was looking forward to tonight, so...I wore a plug all day and kept myself lubed." Hannibal blushed, but did not hold back the exposing admission of his need for Will. "I haven't stopped thinking of you, pushing me down, spanking me and fucking me hard, all day."

"Sweetheart, that fantasy can't compare to how good I'm about to fuck you." Will eased his middle finger into Hannibal's relaxed and slick hole, then started a languid in and out glide. "You feel so damn good, Daddy. You're the most beautiful one I've ever seen or touched."

Hannibal sighed weakly at the praise and spread his thighs, lifted his ass into Will's fingers thrusting harder now, faster. It was a testament to Will's insanely powerful attraction to his lover that despite the cold, he was so hard he couldn't stop shaking, desperate to replace his fingers with his cock.

"That's the right spot, Daddy, huh? There you go, so good for me. Perfect." Will pulled his finger out with an impatient groan, lifted Hannibal's legs in his iron grip, and pressed his aching cock to the older man's entrance.

They were both so ready, Will slid right in, balls deep and groaning in loud pleasure. Will folded Hannibal in half with his legs high over his shoulders and slammed in again and again, the full length of him gliding into the warm, tight envelopment of the older man's body. Their skin slapped together, eyes locked as Hannibal's cock lay thick and heavy against his stomach, curved and reddened with arousal, dripping precum with every feverish thrust from Will. "C'mere, love," Will gasped, pulling out before he came way too soon.

Hannibal, completely desperate for him, clothes hanging off straining, bulging muscles at oddly ripped angles while he moaned for more, Hannibal with the snow drifting around him, beautiful in the eerie blue-gray glow of the misty night. His mighty body collapsed down, open for the taking, breath quickening in that cute, hairy little belly. Will was going to come all over it if he didn't make himself slow down.

He turned Hannibal around, got them both up on their knees and pressed back in, kissing Hannibal's neck, rubbing and squeezing his muscular chest, fingers playfully tugging the grey curls. Every now and again, he kissed the older man's forehead and the front of his hairline where he'd left angry red marks from his yanking and dragging. Hannibal held onto Will's arms and whispered, "Please-- please-- please," his voice getting rougher each time Will's rigid dick pushed in directly to the base and further, Will's balls slapping his ass, fingers pinching his nipples, teeth in his neck -- "*Please--*"

That was about the time Will realized he himself was never going to make it more than another minute of this. Normally, he had admirable stamina in the bedroom, but they weren't in bed -- or on the living room rug, the dining room table, in the shower -- relaxing after a nice day. They were tearing each other up with pleasure after their worst-ever fight, in the snowy yard with the moon looming overhead, bright and full. Will was *tired*, wrung out with emotional extremes, physically coming down from an ordeal of adrenaline and rage, and he needed release. Hannibal clenched around him, arched his back with Will's commanding tug of his hair; he was too exquisite.

"God -- just a little more, another minute, *fuck*," Will pulled Hannibal down on top of him. "I'm tired out of my mind and I still don't want this to end. What you do to me."

“Mylimasis.” Hannibal stroked his face with shaky hands, apologetic, worshipful.

“Ride me,” Will ordered, “I want to watch you, I want to feel you press me into you, sink down on me and fuck yourself until you come, I want to hold onto you and *feel* you, every muscle tensing, taking your pleasure.”

He need hardly add, *take the pleasure because it's yours*. Hannibal got the message loud and clear.

“Oh, Will,” Hannibal groaned as he took Will’s cock in hand beneath him, the hard flesh burning under his touch, slick and sticky from both their arousal. He lined his entrance up, pressed the head of Will’s dick inside, then let go and allowed his body to swallow it in one fluid sink of his hips.

“So full,” he cried, overwhelmed with sensation.

When they were one like this, Will sensed Hannibal's thoughts as if they originated in his own mind, felt the passion reverberating from his lover's core all the way out to his trembling, tingling fingertips and thundering heartbeat. It was cold all around them, but Hannibal was burning up inside, every solid inch of Will buried so far inside him, his low belly felt the tickling warmth of it, and he almost forgot how to be lonely.

“Move,” Will commanded brusquely, gripping Hannibal’s hips hard before spanking his ass, squeezing the soft curves, close, close, so *close* it hurt. He could taste his orgasm, building in fluttering, intensifying waves of joy.

Hannibal bounced on his cock perfectly, and Will knew he was going right to his lover’s prostate, felt it in the way Hannibal threw his head back and moaned, the fast way the older man’s hand roved over his own cock, in time with his quickening moves up and down on Will.

The freezing snow bit into Will’s back, soaking his gingham shirt; his mouth fell open as with a silent cry he came into Hannibal, letting the tightening hold of his hands groping his lover’s ass, digging into his hip, and the wet, warm burst of seed deep inside say it all.

Hannibal rode him through the orgasm, making it spine-tinglingly blissful, panting, huffing out multilingual curses, finally stopping with Will’s cock fully seated inside him as his own erection stiffened even more, then dripped with his release.

Will dipped his fingers into the mess on his stomach and chest and licked it up while giving Hannibal hard eye contact. The older man shuddered at the erotic sight and moaned with the desire to keep Will right where he was.

“Hey, it’s okay. Here.” Will eased Hannibal slowly, carefully off of his softening cock, then stood on wobbly legs and helped his lover to stand beside him. He looped an arm around Hannibal and guided him inside.

"I should be helping you to dispose of the bodies," Hannibal objected when Will tucked him into bed, after an indulgent bubble bath and a long-delayed dinner.

"Hush, now, I have it well in hand, Daddy. You just relax. It's been a harrowing night for you."

"And for you." Hannibal sighed with dismay. "They're only dead because of my ill-judged antics, and it's therefore unfair you should--" He yawned. "Should have the work of dismantling and relocating them."

"Well. That's okay."

"It isn't," Hannibal pouted. "This will require a great deal of work."

He was damn cute lying there with his pj's and his hair which always dipped across his brow after it dried, fanned in shades of silvering brown and blonde.

"I'll make coffee," Will shrugged, barely covering a yawn of his own with a laugh. He'd need a whole pot of black coffee to finish the job, but hey -- he'd pulled the trigger. "It's fine."

"It's too unfair."

"Then," Will smiled, clasping his hand, "*That's* okay, too. I promise you that. From the first day we met, all I've wanted is for you to let me in, let me take care of you. I adore you. I always will."

Humbled, Hannibal blushed, returning Will's smile with a quivering one of his own.

"Reductive though it sounds, thank you, my dear." He was overwhelmed, didn't know what else to say. Sweet, lost, needy Daddy.

Will caressed his cheek and kissed him softly. Arranging the blanket over Hannibal's chest, then playing with the collar of his lover's striped pajamas, Will added, "I'll take our trophies from inside the dear, departed agents, of course. Disappear the rest of them and their car. Then we can tell Jack we were knocked out by the Ripper, left behind when he took Liu and Ross."

"I see." Hannibal's lashes fluttered as sleep nudged closer into his consciousness. "I suppose we probably saw fleeting glimpses of a masked man, bearing some resemblance in figure and dress style to Frederick Chilton."

"Oh, gosh, I suppose we did. Better tell Jack all about that." Will nuzzled their noses together with a tender laugh, surprised when Hannibal took his face in both hands, tired eyes forced open.

"Hey," Will sighed in concern, his voice gentle, soothing. "What is it, honey? It's okay, it's okay, you can tell me."

"I don't think I deserve you, Will. I don't think I'm worthy. I think it's because...because I couldn't save her..." Hannibal closed his eyes again, too exhausted for more tears. He could

let the weight of this confession press him into sleep instead. Will knew he meant Mischa, anyway.

“You don’t have to say that part, Hannibal.” Will kissed him goodnight. “I know. And anytime you need to role-play leaving me, have me stop you and threaten you, that’s just fine. Warn me next time, though, okay?”

Hannibal nodded, pacified. "Okay."

"I'm here for you, always. You don't have to think you deserve me to let me love you, but someday, I hope you'll believe it, see yourself through my eyes and know, how special you are to me, irreplaceable."

"I love you, Will." Hannibal nodded off to sleep, his tight grip on Will's hand only then easing as his breathing slowed to content slumber.

"Love you too, sweetheart."

End Notes

Many thanks to ISeeTheUnseen, who suggested the concept of scary! Will coming unhinged when Hannibal tries to leave. ❤️

Thank you, thank you, Birdie, who contributed some brilliant ideas of how the Murder Husbands might react in this scenario. And to all of my "Gold Rush" readers for your continued support and encouragement! 🥰

Chapter 17 of the main "Gold Rush" storyline is drafted and coming this week! ❤️🍷✨

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!